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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1918

THE KING, THE LORDS AND COMMONS—AND CARSON

There was a time when the King, Lords and Commons were spoken of as "the three estates of the realm," and Burke indicated the growing power of the press by the eloquent and emphatic term—"the fourth estate." Whether or not in these days a decadent press has abdicated the high function prophetically assigned to by Burke matters not for the moment. But an equally pithy and eloquent mot of Tim Healy, M.P., together with a brutal truth baldly put by John Dillon, suggests the interesting question as to whether Sir Edward Carson is now "the fourth estate," or whether, aided and abetted by other powerful subverters of the constitution, he usurps the functions of the Commons to such an extent that "the three estates of the realm" may with biting wit and bitter truth be called: The King, Lords and Carson.

The arrival of the English papers with full reports of the debate on the Government Conscriptio. Home Rule proposals affords some interesting reading and makes the news agencies' summaries appear not only meagre but wilfully misleading. Since Ireland continues to be not only a leading news topic, but the subject of all sorts of comments, few of them characterized by sanity and restraint, we propose to give an idea of the way the latest contentious Government proposals were received by the Parliament and press of England. Readers of Irish origin or sympathy will find that public opinion in England is better informed and consequently less rabid and unfair than the shreds and patches cabled to our daily papers and their comments thereon would suggest.

In view of the revolutionary nature of the present Franchise Act which will in all probability place the control of Parliament and Government in the hands of the Labor Party after the next election, the views of Mr. Henderson, the most outstanding Labor Leader and former member of the Government, are equally interesting and important:

MR. HENDERSON said that conscription had been supported by right hon. gentlemen on the Front Bench, which having regard to the seriousness of the situation, displayed more reckless courage than wisdom. He recognized that only the Government knew the military needs but it did not follow that they were compelled in haste to undertake that which two previous Governments declined—the responsibility of dealing with the Irish problem not by increasing the liberty of the Irish people, but by destroying their liberty. (Nationalist cheers.)

If the Government would withdraw the clause it would be the clearest course in the interest of this country. If they could not see their way to do that they ought frankly to announce that if they got their clause they would not put it in operation until Home Rule was absolutely the law of the land in Ireland. (Cheers.) The Government ought to undertake before the Committee closed to bring in their bill immediately. At present, so far as he could see, the only thing that was certain for Ireland was conscription; the only thing that was doubtful was self-determination and self-government. That was a very dangerous position.

He strongly urged that Home Rule be passed into law and put into operation before conscription be attempted as the only means of averting disaster.

This was on Friday, April 12th. For the third time Mr. Asquith, former Prime Minister, calmly, but with the calm of strong conviction, categorically and unequivocally opposed conscription for Ireland. Noting Bonar Law's threat that the Government would resign in case the measure was

voted down, he made this remarkable declaration:

MR. ASQUITH—"If we were under normal conditions or conditions which were anything like normal—and when I use the word 'normal' I am not speaking of conditions of peace, but I am referring to conditions of war—if we were in conditions which even in time of war were normal, or anything like normal, I should not hesitate for a moment to support, and so far as I could, to give effect to the opinions which I expressed by appropriate Parliamentary action. It is not, I hope I may be allowed to say, from slackness of conviction, or I hope from defect of courage, that I do not take that course. Not only are the conditions not normal, but they are conditions which are unexampled in the history of this country."

Then depicting "the extent and urgency of the perils" of three weeks ago, and the loss of time and effort consequent on a change of government at a time "when in the interests of this country and of the world it is essential that they should continuously, unremittently concentrate every hour of their time, every faculty of their minds, every fibre of their being, upon saving from disaster the course of the Allies," he then continued:

"I cannot take that responsibility. When I say that, I have not in the least degree modified my view as to the gravity and responsibility which the Government are taking upon themselves in regard to the application of conscription to Ireland (cheers), and I wish to associate myself with a great deal of what has fallen from my right honorable friend the member for Barnard Castle (Mr. Henderson)."

Mr. Asquith was at some pains to point out that the clause was only "an empowering clause; it is not mandatory." It may by Order-in-Council be extended to Ireland. That would take time. Then Mr. Asquith read from a speech of the Minister of National Service, on Jan. 17th of this year, to the effect that it would take months before such a measure could give results. "And I have no doubt," continued Mr. Asquith, "what the Minister of National Service said then is equally true and appropriate now." And then the Ex-Premier urged the one straightforward and statesmanlike course, the course that would be at once a guarantee of sincerity and afford a chance for practical unity:

"Will the Government now make it perfectly plain that if this clause is added to the Bill, and the Bill receives the Royal Assent and becomes an Act of Parliament, and this empowering clause—is it only an empowering clause—is at the disposal of the Executive, will they state definitely and explicitly that the time shall be occupied in priority to all other business, except, of course, what is indispensably necessary for the actual conduct of the War, in passing through this House and through another House until it receives the Royal Assent a generous and unstinted measure of Irish self-government? If so, I believe that even now we might without prolongation of this embittered and most unhappy controversy arrive at practical unity."

To this appeal for a "definite and explicit statement," The Times reports Mr. Duke, the Irish Secretary, as saying:

"I do on behalf of His Majesty's Government and on my own responsibility assure the House that it is the intention of the Government that this Bill shall be presented without delay and as an urgent matter, and that it will be prosecuted with all the despatch which His Majesty's Government can procure for it."

In view of the whole tenor of Mr. Asquith's speech, of his association of himself with what Mr. Henderson had already said on the subject, Mr. Duke's assurance was accepted by the House as "definitely and explicitly" pledging the Government to enact self-government for Ireland before enforcing conscription.

"There was a great cheer," says the Times, "when he asked the House to believe that nothing would be more satisfactory to the Government than that the Parliament which was designed should be erected in Dublin before a man came to the Colours."

The divided counsels of the Government were painfully in evidence when later Mr. Duke was forced into the humiliating position of denying that he had made any such promise; the cable faithfully reported his denial. When we read the full report of the debate we do not wonder that Mr. Duke resigned; the wonder is that he did not resign without eating his words and leave the wobbling Government to find some other way out.

The Ex-Secretary for Ireland, during his speech agreeing with Mr. Asquith that the time that must intervene before conscription could be applied would give ample opportunity to enact Home Rule, said:

"If that takes place, what reason is there why at an early date there should not be upon the Statute-book a Bill for the establishment of self-government in Ireland?"

MR. DILLON—"Carson is the reason. (Cheers.) You know that. He has not the least notion of allowing you to do it."

It is probable that it is precisely because the Irish leader was absolutely right that Mr. Duke is no longer Secretary for Ireland. His speech during the debate appears to be that of a man honest and sincere. And the shifty policy of the Government on this question made it impossible in view of his speech to retain both office and self-respect.

At another point in his speech this lively and interesting passage at arms occurred:

MR. DUKE—"The Sovereign Legislature of King, Lords, and Commons—MR. T. HERALY—interrupting—King, Lords and Carson."

MR. DUKE—"The obligation to secure the public defence was upon the Government and when a law was enacted for that purpose it was a law that was entitled to the obedience of every man who recognized the restraints of civilized society."

MR. SCANLAN—"Was the Home Rule Act of 1914 a law of that kind? Cheers and cries of 'Order.' Mr. Scanlan remained standing for some time but his remarks could not be heard owing to cries of protest from the benches opposite."

It is not hard to guess the tenor of Mr. Scanlan's inaudible remarks. Similar remarks are heard in every part of the world.

If Mr. Duke belonged to the same variety of the human species as some of the misinformed Canadian commentators on the Irish situation he might still be Chief Secretary for Ireland; but being a well-informed and self-respecting English gentleman he resigned. The casuistry which glorifies the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant, and utterly condemns the pledge against conscription by an alien government does not satisfy the conscience of that sort of man. During his speech Mr. Duke, quite honestly and sincerely it would seem, said:

"It would be the worst disservice to the State to call into the ranks men who were suffering under a historic sense of grievance. The Government wants to remove that grievance. It seeks the help of this House to remove it. It seeks the help of the country to remove it. It believes that here in this Chamber there will be the overwhelming force of public opinion in favor of such a measure as it will be the business of His Majesty's Government to present."

But Carson, it seems, will not allow the Government to present it. And though Carson may defy or veto the Government to present it, and though Carson may defy or veto the enactments of the King, Lords and Commons amid the prayerful plaudits of pious, God-fearing and law-abiding men, the turbulent Irish incur merit exaction when they show disrespect for the authority of the King, Lords, and Carson.

When this crisis is past it is not too much to hope that the unanimous verdict will be the rational, democratic conclusion thus expressed by the Westminster Gazette:

"We have paid a great price as a nation and as an Empire for the Ulster veto, and the time has come when our safety imperatively requires its removal."

ENGLISH OPINION ON IRISH CONSCRIPTION

The scraps of English opinion condemnatory of unanimous Irish opposition to conscription cabled to our papers are apt to mislead us as to the mind and conscience of England, something regrettable in the extreme as it tends directly to destroy the mutual good will and confidence which for a generation has been growing space between the peoples of the two islands and their greater emigrant stock throughout the English speaking world. The mischievous activity of those who through press, platform or pulpit endeavor to make it appear as if that opposition were due to the Catholic Church, whatever their professions, are very effectively promoting Germany's object of causing disunion amongst the peoples allied against her.

In the first place Ireland is unanimously opposed to conscription, quite as much so in the Orange North as in the Catholic South. Sir Edward Carson has said that he will urge, even beseech his followers to accept conscription, but urging and beseeching notwithstanding, that fighting Irish Protestant, Loftus Bryan (whose letter we reproduce on page 1) caustically remarks:

"There still remains about three counties in Ulster the leaders of which are so eaten up with religious bigotry and intolerance that they put every obstacle in the way of an Irish settlement. These are the people who proclaim their loyalty to

the empire from the housetops, but I noticed in the daily papers of April 18 that the first riot against conscription in Ireland had just occurred in Belfast."

There hasn't been an extravagant Sinn Fein speech or altercation that has not been blazoned forth as rank Bolshevism. Fifteen thousand Belfast rioters who wrecked every shop and window in the street are carefully camouflaged in the headlines so that the average reader sees only ordinary Irish turbulence, probably promoted by the Catholic bishops! The Irish Convention, which had Irish affairs so entirely in their own hands (as spurious Imperialists never tire of telling us) that never again can an Irishman blame England for mismanaging Irish government, placed themselves on record with regard to conscription, and it will be noted that not one Irish bishop and only two Nationalists, one of them a Protestant, were on the committee charged with the consideration of that subject. Here is the finding of that Committee as contained in an appendix to the Report:

On November 1, 1917, the Grand Committee of the Convention appointed a Sub-Committee, composed of Lord Desart (chairman, Government nominee), the Duke of Abercorn (Tyron County Council), Captain Doran (Louth Co. Council), Captain Gwynn (Irish Party), and Mr. J. B. Powell (Southern Unionists), to consider questions of defence and police. On November 29 this Sub-Committee presented an Interim Report as follows on the question of Conscription: "Assuming that a scheme of self-government for Ireland be adopted, including the establishment of an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive Government responsible thereto, we think that would in practice be impossible to impose a system of compulsory service in Ireland without the assent and cooperation of the Irish Parliament."

"As to whether, as an abstract proposition, it would be desirable, by vesting these powers in the Imperial Parliament, to secure united and simultaneous action in this direction in both islands, it is, we think, unnecessary for us to express an opinion, as we think it would be impracticable effectively to enforce such a demand except with the approval of an Irish Parliament, without which the action and efficient cooperation of the Executive could not be secured."

"Indeed, it seems to us a direct consequence of the creation of an Irish Parliament that any measure of this character must be submitted to the Irish Parliament before it could be enforced on Ireland."

Did Lloyd George consider himself bound in decency and honor to take into consideration this recommendation of the Irish Convention? He did not; and that fact is an eloquent refutation of all the buncombe arguments based on the plenary powers of Irishmen themselves to settle the Irish question without let or hindrance.

It is refreshing to read the honest indignation of organs of real English opinion after the rapid abuse of Canadians who, aping last-ditch Tories, call expressions of sterling English convictions, "vain babbling."

This from The New Statesman is most excellent babbling, and can be answered only by some such epithet:

"The Irish are solid against conscription imposed upon them by a British Parliament. Englishmen may think that they ought not to be. They may feel it cruelly unfair that Ireland should be allowed to go her own way, whilst we are fighting a war for Europe and for civilization."

"We will leave the Irish Question better than we found it," said Sir Horace Plunkett some time ago of the work of the Convention. He had every justification for his belief; but he reckoned without one factor. At the very moment when the Report of the Convention was expected, and we were all hoping to measure the advance that had been made towards reconciling the two countries and the two parties, Mr. Lloyd George, confessedly without having considered the Convention's views or inquired what the members of the Convention had to say about conscription, comes down to the House and coolly fires his long range gun. The results were instantaneous.

And this from The Nation helps us to understand despite Bourbon Tories and their overseas imitators, despite the folly and stupidity of the British ruling class where Ireland is concerned, the persistence of the term British fair play:

"No Irish Parliament exists to commend conscription to Ireland. No Irish leader was consulted; no one of Ireland's spiritual directors. The Irish Convention, which has been declared to be Ireland's organ of 'self-determination,' issues a unanimous report against conscription through a Committee of which the Duke of Abercorn is Chairman. The Prime Minister dares to tell the House of Commons that he has not even read it."

Sir Horace Plunkett, surely the best informed on the subject of the

Irish Convention, and just as surely not a tool or dupe of the Irish Catholic Bishops, gave this as his deliberate judgment of the results of its deliberations.

Sir Horace Plunkett in presenting the Report of the Proceedings of the Irish Convention, of which he was chairman, gave this message of the Prime Minister:

"The Report," he says, "shows that in the Convention, whilst it was not found possible to overcome the objections of the Ulster Unionists, a majority of Nationalists, all the Southern Unionists, and five out of the seven Labor representatives were agreed that the scheme of Irish self-government set out in paragraph 42 of the Report should be immediately passed into law."

"The Convention has laid a foundation of Irish agreement unprecedented in history."

At the present writing the cables assert that Home Rule and conscription are both likely to be dropped from the Government legislative program. The cable lies at the bottom of the Atlantic as an Irishman once said. Home Rule cannot be dropped. Either the present Government or another is bound in honor, in decency, bound for the sake of the Empire during and after the War, to give the government of Ireland into the hands of the Irish people. The English factions who would outrage the conscience of the world and make England the Pharisae of the nations are bound to go the way of the junkers of Prussia.

Their little political trick (if such it was) to make conscription kill Home Rule will fail.

SEEING THE LIGHT

We made a discovery lately that aroused within us the same emotions that we would have felt if we had happened upon a Presbyterian elder saying his beads, or a Methodist parson making the sign of the cross. We actually found an expression of sane religious sentiment on the editorial page of the Toronto Globe.

The article referred to was entitled "The Deepest Need." After citing the London Chronicle to the effect that there could be no peace till Germany experienced "a change of heart," the testimony of a member of the German Military Staff that genuine pacific ideals were unattainable without "a spiritual transformation of the human race," and lastly the utterance of Mr. Arthur Ponsonby that there can be no durable national reconstruction till each individual attends to that reconstruction in "the inner chambers of his own soul," the writer adds that "these testimonies to fundamental spiritual realities are all the more impressive because of the generally accepted idea before the War that human life could be renovated by re-modeling social and political institutions."

In conclusion he says: "It is becoming clear that no such modification will suffice to overcome moral perils. Pulling down a slum and erecting a model apartment house cannot destroy the fascination for crime. Environment, though powerful, is not the only factor, and today there is much frank recognition of the fact that something more and deeper than any civil, social or political factors is necessary to destroy existing evils." The following striking words of that venerable American journalist, Henry Watterston, would add a fitting climax to the above. "The one and only power that can save us," says he, "is the Christian religion. Democracy is but a side issue. The permanent issue underlying the issue of democracy is the religion of Christ and Him crucified, the bedrock of civilization, the source and resource of all that is worth having in the world that is and that gives promise in the world to come."

To those who, in making their morning offering during the past month, have prayed for our Holy Father's intention, "The reconstruction of society after the War," the above testimonies, coming as they do from those without the fold, will be very consoling. They are an evidence that a chastened world is beginning to see the light, is beginning to realize that human agencies are impotent in the face of existing evils and dangers. Even the victors in the great conflict will be sobered nations. The price has been too great to admit of any vainglorious exultation. May we not hope that the intention named for the month of Easter, triumph and peace, may be a harbinger of world peace!

The coming of that peace will usher in a new era in the Church's history. No matter which side wins in the conflict, the task that lies before the Church will not be unlike that which she faced when the Huns and the Vandals of Northern Europe overthrew the old Roman Empire, and the only institution left standing was called upon to reconstruct society. As out of that chaos arose the civilization of the middle ages that was a bulwark against the Moor and the Saracen, so we look forward to the establishment in Europe of a new and better organized and more virile civilization that will make for the salvation of souls, and be an impregnable barrier against the waves of eastern paganism that bid fair to be a menace to her civil and religious life.

The most consoling spectacle, that we have witnessed since this War began, has been that of our Separated Brethren flocking to their churches not on Sundays alone but on week days, and offering up not mere conventional prayers but the genuine outpourings of humbled and chastened hearts to that God to Whom they have been drawn closer by adversity. When a man or a nation prays it is well with both. It was while Saul of Tarsus was praying at Damascus that the scales fell from his eyes, and recovering his sight he became a vessel of election to carry Christ's name before the gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. There is every indication that, in our day, many who like Saul of Tarsus have been through ignorance persecuting the Church of God will have the scales removed from their eyes, and seeing the truth will become like him zealous witnesses of that truth and ardent apostles of that Church which has been to them, in those terrible times, a haven of peace.

THE GLEANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THAT IN EVEN these days of stress and anxiety men find time to cultivate the friendship of books and money to indulge it, is evidenced by the sale at Sotheby's a short time ago of the library of the late Mr. Thomas Dunn, brother of the Catholic Bishop of Nottingham. Mr. Dunn had been a collector of books all his life, and brought to the pursuit a knowledge of the good things in literature and the early productions of the printing press, which is quite uncommon. His library was particularly rich in old Missals, Books of Hours, and early editions of the old classical theologians and philosophers. A first edition of the Summa of St. Thomas of Aquin, for example, being the first book printed alone by Peter Schoeffer, brought £238. The sale as a whole realized no less a sum than £32,391, which while modest enough compared with such princely collections as the Spencer or the Ashburton libraries, still constitutes a record for a private collection in these days.

IT WOULD be difficult to imagine a greater outrage on good taste, or a more melancholy lack of sense of the fitness of things, than the use of Don Quixote as a medium for caricaturing the Kaiser, as was done by a well-known cartoonist in the Toronto World the other day. If there are any human qualities more than others which Cervantes' immortal creation is intended to typify, they are chivalrous respect for women, and charity for the weak and defenceless. The poor, distraught Knight did many strange things in the course of his adventurous expedition, but while the reader may smile at his hallucinations and pity his folly, he is less than human if he fails to hug close to his heart the kindly, chivalrous spirit of the man as depicted by the great Spanish romancist. A character further removed in that respect from the Kaiser it would be difficult to conceive, and were he other than a creation of the imagination, the cartoon alluded to might well be termed an insult to his memory.

THE PEOPLE of the Maritime Provinces have reason to congratulate themselves that owing to the great development of recent years in the matter of scientific appliances for the protection of mariners the Bay of Fundy may now be considered as safe for navigation as any port in the world of equal size and importance. According to the St. John Board of Trade Journal, the protection that is now thrown around the mariner in the way of lighthouses, lightships, fog alarms, automatic buoys, bell-buoys and other forms of precautionary signals, has almost wholly eliminated the perils which once attended shipping in that historic body of water. This is borne out by the fact that for the past four

years, though 22,614 ships, of a tonnage of 13,660,866, have passed in and out of St. John, there has not been a single casualty of any consequence in the Bay of Fundy. This is a splendid record and no doubt the source of much satisfaction to the sea-girt Provinces, as it should be to Canada generally.

SOME YEARS ago, we gather from the same source of information, when the question came before the St. John Board of Trade, a careful study was made of the wreck record for a period of eighteen years prior to 1914, with the result that carefully prepared statistics then drawn up showed that with a total tonnage of 42,029,262 tons entering the port, the casualty average was but .033 of one per cent. This statement was based on the record for the whole Bay of Fundy from Cape Sable up. It is a satisfaction too, to know that these figures have received up-to-date confirmation from the combined evidence of several masters of ocean steamers submitted to the Special Pilots Commission which sat in St. John a few weeks ago, whose finding must have an important bearing upon St. John's future development as an ocean port.

WRITING of "Luther and the Reformation," in the Presbyterian and Westminster on occasion of the celebration (or, perhaps we should say non-celebration, for the thing was discreetly lost sight of by those most concerned) of the 400th anniversary of the "Reformer's" birth the Rev. Dr. Wilson said: "When due allowance has been made to all men and movements, Luther was the man who killed the Pope." And again: "When Luther stood, the Pope fell. For it is in the very nature of things that if a fraud is once exposed it begins to die, if a sham is once stabbed by an idea the wound is mortal." Very curious, that if this is so Luther now looks like the dead one, while, even by their hostile criticism the whole non-Catholic world testifies that after more than three centuries the Pope is very much alive and wields an influence which the whole body of Luther's present-day followers cannot pretend to rival.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

BERLIN ANNOUNCES the overwhelming defeat of the "Reds" of Finland during a five days' battle in the southwestern region of the country near Lakhti, and the capture of 20,000 prisoners. Following upon the recent occupation of Viborg and the extermination of its "Red" garrison, the victory will give Finland a German peace. Already a section of the Finnish press calls for the creation of a kingdom to take the place of the Republic. One of the Kaiser's six safety-first sons is reasonably certain of the job after the very thorough way in which the Kaiser's troops have slaughtered Finland's radicals. Sweden will not like a German prince on a bayonet-propped throne in Helsinki, but the governing class in Sweden is strongly pro German and will be able to prevent any outburst of popular resentment.

SOUTH of the Avre the French have distinctly improved their positions by adding Hill 82, near Castel, to the ground they hold. The hill is the highest bit of land in the vicinity, and had its enemy continued to hold it he might have made the operation of the Paris Amiens railway, three miles to the west, somewhat hazardous by mounting guns upon the hill.

AN ALMOST COMPLETE suspension of enemy activity in the Flanders battlefield proves how hard hit Von Arnim's army was in the struggle for the ridges, and how great was its need for a breathing time.

"ON THE whole front there was intense aircraft activity," says a despatch from Rome telling of skirmishes at various points along the Trentino battle line. The aviators loaned by Britain to the Italians on this sector include a number of Canadians, and our lads are also taking part in the patrolling of the Adriatic, across which the Austrian armies come to bomb the Italian cities.

IF THE disturbances in Bohemia, and in Slavonia and Croatia, continue the Austrian military authorities may fear to carry on aggressive war in Italy with serious disaffection behind them, which may flame out at any moment into rebellion. There are already many thousands of Bohemians, Croats and Serbs captured on the Italian front now serving with the Italian army in the hope of helping to free their countrymen from Austrian rule. To send more Bohemians, Poles and Southern Slavs to fight on the Italian front would be to risk their surrender in large numbers at the first favorable opportunity.—Globe, May 4.

A GOOD WEEK

LONDON, May 3.—A representative of General Radcliffe, director of military operations at the war office, today summed up the military situation on the western front as follows: